

which, as if from a shaft, the most powerful of them wells up, and uniting with the others in a sort of grotto of ferns and mosses pours over a ledge in a sheet of foam, a powerful waterfall, and slides away, a vigorous river of a wonderful blue-green colour, under a snow-bridge, starting full fledged on its course. The surroundings of this spring are wild and magnificent. A few Bakhtiaris crept across the lower part of the face of rock, and perched themselves above it. The roar of the water, now loud, now subdued, made wild music, and the snow-bridges added to the impressiveness of the scene.

Of course the geographical interest of this region is engrossing.<sup>1</sup> This remarkable spring, called by the Bakhtiaris Sar-i-Cheshmeh-i-Kurang ("the head source of the Kurang"), and until this journey held to be the real source, is not, however, the actual birthplace of the Karuii or Kurang, which was afterwards traced up to its head-waters in the magnificent Kuh-i-Eang.<sup>2</sup>

A few words on this, the one real river of which Persia can boast, and which seems destined to play an important part in her commercial future, will not be out of place. From its source it is a powerful and important stream, full, deep, and flowing with great velocity for much of its upper course between precipices varying in height from 1000 to 3000 feet. It is a perennial stream, fordable in very few places, and then only in its upper-waters. Varying in width usually from fifty to a hundred yards, it is compressed at the Pul-i-Ali-kuh

into a breadth  
of about nine feet.

The steepness and height of its banks  
make it in

<sup>1</sup> A few geographical paragraphs which follow here  
and on p. 35 are  
later additions to the letter.

<sup>2</sup> Although the correct name of this river is  
undoubtedly Kurang, I  
have throughout adopted the ordinary spelling *Karun*,  
under which it is  
commercially and politically known.